

THE SPY WHO SPILLED THE BEANS

CPYRGHT

THE READER will look in vain for information about the edition, the date of printing, etc., that is usually given in book reviews. In this particular article we shall speak of what was not printed in the book under review, since what was printed does not deserve to be reviewed. It is not a paradox. It is what really happened after the publication of ex-spy Reinhard Gehlen's memoirs in the English language.

Let us first make an excursion into the history of this autobiographical masterpiece. Last September West German press magnate Springer's newspapers printed with a great deal of ballyhoo excerpts from the memoirs of Gehlen, one-time chief of the spy organization set up in West Germany after the war by the Americans and later president of the Federal Intelligence Service (see *New Times* No. 38 for 1971). When the book itself appeared, it turned out that the Springer mountain had brought forth a mouse. There was nothing in the book apart from dubious self-exaltation and primitive anti-communist propaganda. The world press qualified the ex-General's book as a propaganda stunt in support of the Christian Democratic Opposition which was trying with a might and main to prevent the collapse of the anti-communist myths concocted in the Adenauer era.

There were not very many who swallowed Gehlen's bait—the book failed to become a best seller. Some nevertheless did, particularly American publishers who have a penchant for anti-Soviet sensations, like World Publishing, which paid Gehlen over 1.5 million marks even before his book had been published in German.

The story of the American version of Gehlen's memoirs was told me by David Irving, a British journalist specializing in the history of World War II. World Publishing had engaged him to "enrich" Gehlen's book with some "interesting" facts and at the same time to style-edit the translation. To do that, Irving went to West Germany. The former "superspy" granted him several interviews at his villa on the shore of Lake Starnberger. Irving did

his best, with the result that the book became much thicker. But when the proofs were sent to the West German Federal Intelligence Service, its chiefs were horrified: Gehlen had blabbed about many things that were supposed to be top-secret. And so whole pages and not only paragraphs were deleted on the instructions of censors from the American version. The book Irving showed me was already devoid of those piquant details.

Books, they say, have their destinies. The pages deleted from the American version of Gehlen's memoirs had them too. They found their way—God knows how!—to the editors of the Hamburg *Spiegel* who made public what was supposed to remain secret. What exactly?

In the German original of his memoirs, Gehlen affirmed that his spy organization dealt only with foreign affairs. He swore that "German politicians were never spied upon" when he was in charge. In his talks with Irving, however, the erstwhile General was more outspoken: the Federal Intelligence Service spied on West German politicians, he said, particularly those who refused to abide by cold-war canons. In 1968, for instance, he ordered his agents to keep an eye on Egon Bahr, a diplomat with the rank of special envoy and a confidant of the then Foreign Minister Willy Brandt. More or less the same was done in relation to another of Brandt's confidants—journalist Leo Bauer. Gehlen had in fact asked his colleagues from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation to help collect "material" about Bauer's past.

The revelations were hardly surprising, for the whole world knew that the Gehlen organization was interfering in the internal affairs of the Federal Republic. But the former spy General made definitely clear what line the Federal Intelligence Service was following when he was in charge. Gehlen, who was working for the Christian Democratic Union when he sought to compromise Egon Bahr in 1968, naturally is only too ready to help the CDU to the best of his ability today....

Another interesting thing he blabbed out to Irving was his activity in the Middle East. When the German version of Gehlen's memoirs was put out last autumn, British publicist E. H. Cookridge told a London news conference that Gehlen had kept quiet about many of his doings in the Middle East. At the beginning of the 1950s, he said, Gehlen had sought to influence Egypt's policy. For that purpose he sent several former prominent SS-men there with instructions to worm their way into the Egyptian intelligence service and police and use them to influence Cairo's foreign policy. When the attempt failed, Gehlen began to help the Israeli intelligence service to smuggle spies into the United Arab Republic.

Cookridge's exposé was corroborated by Gehlen himself. In the American version of his memoirs he said that the Central Intelligence Agency and Allen Dulles, its director at that time, had asked him to concentrate on the Middle East, and so he sent several former SS "fuehrers" there. But, Gehlen continued, "after the Suez war in 1956, we paid particular attention to the Israelis. We gave them expert advice on the development of their small but efficient secret service. We shared our experience with them and helped them infiltrate spies into Arab countries."

Like the German edition, the American version of Gehlen's memoirs is undoubtedly designed to fan up the embers of the cold war. That is why the retired "superspy" has decided to spill the beans. The author of the *Spiegel* article, however, writes that Gehlen's former Federal Intelligence Service colleagues see another reason for his outspokenness—his desire to make the English-language version a financial success. Well, the first reason does not rule out the second, and vice versa. With Gehlen, the end justifies the means, especially when it is a question of money.

LEV BEZYMENSKY,
 New Times Correspondent in Bonn